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ABSTRACT

This paper argues that an inclusive notion of citizenship is impossible in the modern state, predicated as it is on an opposition between the public and private spheres of social life. Until that opposition is addressed in the lives of men and women, women's ambiguous relationship with citizenship and the state will continue. This paper explores some of the ways in which education perpetrates women's and girls' lack of citizenship status, in the context of the current revival of interest, in Australia and other countries, in citizenship education. The document highlights some of the real issues of of the ways in which education perpetuates women's and girls' lack of citizenship status, in the context of current revival interest in citizenship education in Australia and other countries. The document highlights some of the real issues of continuing sexual difference and inequality in curriculum participation and its outcomes, which bear directly on men's and women's participation as citizens. Contains 58 references. (EH)

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Gender equity, citizenship education and inclusive curriculum:Another case of "add women and stir"?

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Gender equity, citizenship education and inclusive curriculum: Another case of "add women and stir"?[1]

Stinking dull work, the labour of sheilas at best, with all that smile and how do you do, sir, but you had to admire them for it.

Tim Winton, *Cloudstreet*, 1991, 76.

Women are incorporated into a sphere that both is and is not in civil society.

Carole Pateman, *The Sexual Contract*, 1988, 11

It is taken to be a truism that education is, or should be, in part a preparation for citizenship, directed towards active and successful participation by all students in a modern democratic society. However, despite the clear evidence of widely disparate outcomes from women's and men's education across western industrialised nations (OECD, 1986), and in Australia (New South Wales Government, 1994, 1), the gendered nature of citizenship as both a philosophical and social educational goal has received little attention from educational theorists.

Since the mid-1980s, there has been a revival of interest in participatory democratic theory and in particular, a renewed focus on the concept of citizenship as a new organizing principle for democratic politics (Pateman, 1992, 30). This conception of citizenship is reflected in the contemporary goals of education which are concerned broadly with the preparation of students to participate actively and successfully in social life.

However, running parallel to this revival of interest is an extraordinarily vast literature (for example, Benhabib, 1992; Cass,1994; Leech, 1994; Pateman, 1988, 1989, 1992; Shanley and Pateman, 1991; Young, 1987) on the gendered nature of citizenship, and "the problem of women's standing in a political order in which citizenship has been made in the male image" (Pateman, 1989, 14). Feminist scholars (for example, Charlesworth, 1992; Pateman, 1988, 1989, 1992; Tapper, 1986; Thornton, 1995) have destabilised the line of demarcation between public and private life. But as Thornton (1995, 199) points out, on the one hand, citizenship combines the public and the social with the private and the individual in unusual ways. On the other hand, the primarily public locus of citizenship suggests identifiably separable public and private spaces, within which the state is the paradigmatic focus of public life. Despite their fluidity and ambiguity, the separation of public and private spheres is a marked characteristic of modern liberal societies, and it is argued, a major factor circumscribing women's citizenship entitlements.

Mainstream debates about citizenship are, for the most part, proceeding in blissful ignorance of the feminist cross-disciplinary deconstruction of the citizen-as-male, and the analysis of women's and men's different relationships with public and private life.

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[1] This paper is part of work-in-progress on citizenship education. Earlier versions of this paper are published in "Citizenship and Education", special issue of Melbourne Studies in Education Vol. 29, No 2, 1995 and in "Reconstructing Civics Education: *Whereas the People* as a Prescription for the New Civics", Curriculum Perspectives, May 1996.

Women continue to be treated as an interest group, a status which stereotypes them as dependents or clients of the state. The masculinity of citizenship, perpetuated in both texts and in positions of power in the modern state, is retained despite the formal "letting in" of women. Discussions of citizenship education philosophy and curriculum are a clear example of this tendency.

Much of the feminist critique focusses on women's exclusion from the ideal of the civic public realm of citizenship which is both normatively masculine, and relies on an opposition between the public and private dimensions of human life. This broad ranging literature has demonstrated that women are not accepted fully as citizens of the polity and are in fact outside the frame of patriarchal citizenship. Women's participation in the state remains peripheral and there is an enormous gulf between the apparent guarantee of full citizenship for women and women's actual lived experience of that guarantee (Leech, 1994, 81); and that women's status as citizens is underwritten by a sexual contract (Pateman, 1988) denying them free and equal status with men. Feminist legal theory in particular (for example, Charlesworth, 1992; Gavison, 1992; Graycar, 1992, 1993) shows that the burden of women's responsibility for work associated with the private sphere has implications for their legal status as citizens.

The consensus is that equality for women is not, and will not be delivered merely by attempting to include women in the normative conception of man-as-citizen by "laundering some of its ideals" (Young, 1987, 58). Furthermore, Pateman (1989, 14) argues forcefully that women, *as women,* cannot meet the criteria for citizenship. Elaborating this point she observes that

> democratic theorists have not yet confronted the implications of the patriarchal construction of citizenship and so they provide little or no help in elucidating or solving the complex dilemma facing women ... within the contemporary patriarchal order, and within the confines of the ostensibly universal categories of democratic theory; it is taken for granted that for women to be active, full citizens they must become (like) men ... although women have demanded for two centuries that their distinctive qualities and tasks should become part of citizenship - that is, that they should be citizens as women - their demand cannot be met when it is precisely these marks of womanhood that place women in opposition to, or, at best, in a paradoxical and contradictory relation to, citizenship. Women are expected to don the lion's skin, mane and all, ... there is no set of clothes available for a citizen who is a woman.

The substance of the feminist critique of citizenship, then, is firstly that women are not only outside the realm of citizenship whose locus is public life but secondly, that the notion of including women and women's work within conceptions of democratic citizenship is contradictory since citizenship is itself defined in opposition to women and the sphere of work which is relegated to them. This contradiction is encapsulated in very practical terms by Michel Hansenne (1992, 5) the Director-General of the International Labor Organisation:

> Family responsibilities are at the heart of much discrimination against women. Women are expected to stay at home to look after children and are then treated as second-class workers because of this.

It is this contradiction which poses the dilemma for inserting women into conceptions of citizenship. Although this contradiction is addressed in detail by the feminist critique, the Australian report *Whereas the People* ... fails to recognise it as a problem for citizenship education. Further, the conclusion of the feminist critique is that nothing less than an entire reconceptualisation of citizenship is required if its present inadequacies in relation to women, and women's diversity and differences, are to be addressed.

This paper argues that an inclusive notion of citizenship is impossible in the modern state, predicated as it is on an opposition between the public and private spheres of social life.

Until that opposition is addressed in the lives of men and women, women's ambiguous relationship with citizenship and the state will continue. The paper explores some of the ways in which education perpetuates women's and girls' lack of citizenship status, in the context of the current revival of interest in Australia and other countries in citizenship education.

Despite the challenge which feminist political theory and philosophy have posed to understandings of women's place in participatory democracy, there has been comparatively little critique of the importance of women's relationship with education in determining their status as citizens. Notable exceptions are the work of Martin (1981; 1985; 1991) in educational philosophy, and Foster (1989; 1992) and Yates (1991 a,b; 1993) in critiques of inclusive curriculum, which I will take up later in this article in the context of citizenship education. Similarly, Martin (1981; 1985) has shown that the philosophical ideal of the educated person still does not include women and girls. This fundamental philosophical point remains inadequately operationalised in terms of the curriculum and pedagogy of schooling, and consequent student experience. Elsewhere (Foster, 1994a), I argue that girls are not only in a contradictory relationship with schooling as a preparation for citizenship, but that girls and boys experience the curriculum itself in quite different ways. In Australia, attempts to achieve greater educational equality for girls have centred on positioning girls within a deficit framework, as lacking in relation to male norms of the educated person, and encouraging them to measure up to those norms (Foster, 1992). However, since 1993 it has become apparent that the gains girls might make as a result of this approach to sexual equality are being vigorously contested (Foster, 1994b; 1995; 1996). Less apparent are the implications for girls' place within conceptions of citizenship as an educational objective. This article attempts to clarify some of them.

Whereas the People ...

Cass (1994) points out that the "mainstream resurgence of writings on the components of 'citizenship' pays almost no attention to the gendered nature of citizenship". Reading the report of the Australian Civics Expert Group,*Whereas the People ... Civics and Citizenship Education (1994),* one is left with the disappointing impression that the critical literature on the relationship of women with the state and within civil society, and the implications of that relationship for citizenship education, appears to have passed the authors by. In the following section, I will briefly summarise the Report's section on women, and then discuss some of the theoretical problems of the way in which the Report conceptualises women's relationship with citizenship education. I will then discuss several ways in which these theoretical problems are manifested in school life.

Women: A "group with special needs"

Of the Report's 35 recommendations, only one (No. 26) deals with women (p. 112). It recommends that the community citizenship education program should "make explicit provision for specific groups", listing women as one of a number of such groups.

The Report itself dispenses with women in two pages, 99-101, as a "group with special needs", in a chapter entitled "Citizenship Education and the wider community". These two pages do make the important historical point that earlier, more liberal-progressive notions of citizenship inspired by first-wave feminism were crowded out by the idea of the citizen as a male worker. It is noted that women as a group are "less equipped" than men to make their voices heard in the public arena. However, rather than critically evaluate the public arena itself, and the ways in which the development of the citizen-as-male has depended on public-private divisions in society forged along gender lines, the report perpetuates a conception of women as part of the "wider community", outside the realm of citizenship itself. Its solution is a "feminisation" of citizenship. This entails the "translation of private values into the public sphere" which "must result in the recognition of alternative forms of citizenship". An example is given of women's active community

work which should be "acknowledged and valued alongside more traditional, public forms of citizenship". Here, the report fails to come to grips with the prior valorisation of public forms of citizenship, so that while private alternatives may run parallel with public forms, or even be added to them, they must remain unequal on the report's model.

The report states that the Civics Expert Group believes that education has a vital role to play in both increasing the participation of women in national affairs and "enabling them to introduce new ways of conceiving citizenship into the public sphere". Surprisingly, however, neither of these objectives is then taken up and developed within the curriculum chapters of the report. The basis of the civics competence curriculum is to be the Mayer Committee Key Competencies (p.77) with a third added, cultural understandings. The report comments (p.70) that "it is not surprising that the Key Competencies are so attuned to civic competence since they were intended to apply generically to emerging patterns of work and the demands of adult life". It should, however, be remembered that the Mayer Committee decided not to include "Family and Household Management" as a work-related Key Competency, claiming that it does not constitute a generic area of skills. This is a decision which has put Australia out of step with curriculum developments addressing the gendered nature of work in other countries, for example, the Scandinavian countries and Holland.

The report thus effectively endorses a conception of effective citizenship as residing in the public arena of paid work and civic responsibility and involvement. Women may take part in the public world and may attempt to create alternative ways of being citizens, but these remain external and marginal to the actual locus of citizenship, which is public life. Women may attempt to introduce private virtues into the public sphere but these are merely alternatives to public sphere virtues. Although "in recent years people have again begun to urge the feminisation of citizenship" (p.100), this goal is in no way reflected in the proposed citizenship curriculum. The next section discusses some of the problems inherent in the report's conception of citizenship.

Problems in the report's conception of citizenship

I discussed above the report's failure to embody in its curriculum proposals any new valuing of private sphere values and activities, despite its statement of the need to do this, and its acknowledgment of community support for equal participation by women and men in public decision-making processes (p.100). Perhaps the most serious flaw is thus the lack of any challenge, in the framing of citizenship, to the public-private division in social life which ensures that men and women still have a different and unequal relationship with citizenship. This omission is carried through to the curriculum proposals which endorse a very narrow and traditional view of citizenship, which is normatively masculine. There are several important aspects to the report's retention of a normatively masculine framework of citizenship.

The report acknowledges, albeit cursorily, women's secondary status as citizens as a result of the under-valuing of private sphere work and life. Its strategy, however, is to transfer women's secondary status to the public arena, by failing to address men's and women's different and asymmetrical relations with private life. It takes what is fundamentally a liberal position, in which differences of race, nationality, sex, class and religion are assumed not to preclude equal participation in civil society (Manning, 1976, 24). Differences which result from being a member of a "group with special needs" can be overcome by an inclusive approach which helps the individual or group become part of the mainstream citizenry. So as is the case with women, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are allocated two pages. Similarly, however, these differences present no challenge to mainstream curricular assumptions and content, a point to which I will return.

A number of writers (for example, Benhabib, 1993; Luke, 1992; Tapper, 1986) have pointed out that reforms directed towards women's equality in the public sphere, which

fail to take account of the sexual structuring of the public-private division and the maleness of the supposedly abstract, gender-neutral individual, will not overcome women's secondary status, but simply relocate it within the public sphere. The valorisation of the virtuous woman whose realm is private life is a powerful force in maintaining women's exclusion from public affairs. The report exemplifies the tendency in liberal theory to conceptually relocate the feminine, which is tied to the private nexus of nuclear family and mothering, into the public sphere, leaving intact the dichotomous gendered political structure of the public-private division. Pateman (1989, 135) notes a double separation, of domestic life from civil society, and of the private from the public within civil society itself.

As Pateman (1989, 14) points out, "women have always been incorporated into the civil order as 'women', as subordinates or lesser men", while the masculinity of citizenship itself is retained. This tradition of liberal, democratic theory is continued in *Whereas the People*. However, Lloyd (1984, 104) articulates very clearly the contradiction inherent in the notion of extending the liberal conception of the individual to women, and thus the impossibility of success via this strategy:

> Women cannot easily be accommodated into a cultural ideal which has defined itself in opposition to the feminine. To affirm women's equal possession of rational traits, and their rights of access to the public spaces within which they are cultivated and manifested, is politically important. But it does not get to the heart of the conceptual complexities of gender difference ... For it seems implicitly to accept the downgrading of the excluded character traits traditionally associated with femininity, and to endorse the assumption that the only human excellences and virtues which deserve to be taken seriously are those exemplified in the range of activities and concerns that have been associated with maleness.

Inclusive curriculum

Just as Pateman urges a radical transformation in democratic theory, so a transformation in curriculum theory and formulation is needed, beyond "inclusive" approaches which merely seek to incorporate marginalised groups within a mainstream curriculum which fundamentally represents hegemonic world views (Connell, 1987; Foster, 1989; Schuster and Van Dyne, 1984; Yates, 1991a,b).

Connell (1987, 3) points out that although feminist theory has produced an analysis of a large domain of social life through concepts such as sexual politics, patriarchy and the sexual division of labour, the implications of this "conceptual revolution are still to be felt across much of the curriculum". Elsewhere (Foster,1989, 27), I note firstly, that philosophically and pedagogically, "inclusive curriculum" is in fact a valuable, long-term educational objective, rather than being a strategy for affirmative action on behalf of those students whose needs it claims to address, and secondly, that "inclusive curriculum" has never been adequately distinguished from the "common" curriculum, which we know is utilised by boys and girls in quite different ways. Yates (1991a) in particular has offered a forceful critique of the theoretically acritical nature of "inclusive" curriculum:

> The Australian policy discourse concerning "inclusive" curriculum largely implies that ethnic, race and gender differences can be drawn on and integrated, as if no challenge, no questioning of power, no anti-racism, no competing notions of rationality were at issue.

In addition to its philosophically not challenging dominant notions of rationality, Yates (1991b) points to the method of inclusive curriculum as

> incorporating add-on bits and pieces about girls' educational needs, such as how best to give girls more attention, how to cater for girls' different learning styles and preferences, how to be sensitive to cultural and racial differences and how to create school and learning environments that are more supportive of girls as learners, with no clear commitment to what *mainstream learnings* we will introduce to the next generation (my emphasis)

A radical transformation of democratic theory concerning women and citizenship is needed if "democracy" and democratic participation are not to remain the preserve of men (Pateman, 1989, 14-15). Similarly, a radical transformation in mainstream curriculum philosophy and content is needed if citizenship education in Australia is to move beyond the "add-women-and-stir" approach of inclusive curriculum. Unfortunately, *Whereas the People* fails on both counts, lacking a sound theoretical framework for conceptualising women's relations with citizenship, as well as a vision of a curriculum which would address the issues identified in this article. These inadequacies are surprising since, as pointed out earlier, these issues have had a good airing in the theoretical literature as well as in the literature on inclusive curriculum.

In the following section, I will briefly set out several reasons why add-on approaches to including women in a normative framework of the citizen-as-male are incoherent. I will then relate this discussion to the different ways in which boys and girls experience contemporary school settings.

Adding women to the citizen-as-male

I have already discussed the ways in which citizenship education as conceptualised in *Whereas the People* obfuscates the gendered nature of citizenship itself. First, it relies on a notion of the free, autonomous citizen/individual who is in fact male. Second, it fails to deal adequately with the civil distinction between public sphere, "productive" work and private sphere, domestic/care work. Women's private sphere status is briefly alluded to (p.100), but is ultimately deemed separate from, and alternative to, citizenship itself. That these two spheres are at once separate and inseparable (Pateman, 1988, 4), having implications for both men and women as citizens, is glossed over. Consequently, the work/care dichotomy remains embedded in the report's curriculum framework. As I have suggested, this is a flaw which has far-reaching and serious implications for future curriculum development in Australia.

However, the report also glosses over other important dimensions of men's and women's different relations with citizenship. Most important perhaps as Pateman (1988, x) insightfully observes, the social contract of citizenship and democratic civil freedom is actually underwritten by a "sexual contract" within modern patriarchy. This sexual-social pact not only concerns the identification of women's activities with the private sphere, as is the case in *Whereas the People*. It also concerns the fact of patriarchal domination of both spheres, and while women's movement between the two spheres is constrained within a patriarchal society, men may pass freely between them.

Discussing the "deep and fundamental differences in the ways in which men and women arrive at citizenship", Leech (1994, 86) and Cass (1994) pinpoint the role of women as primary caregivers as the major factor limiting their participation as citizens. Cass notes that women's caring responsibilities are antithetical to the idea of the "citizen" as an "independent actor, participating as an individual in the labour market, participating democratically as an individual citizen in political processes, receiving social benefit entitlement as a right based on individual citizenship". In addition, allied to the notion of patriarchal sex-right is the material advantage which men gain from women's domestic and care work (Eveline, 1994, 141). Connell (1994, 4) refers to this as the "patriarchal dividend" which, he comments, is increasing rather than decreasing, and whose significance and size is constantly underestimated in discussions of the gender order and of masculinity.

Recalling male privilege through redistributive equal opportunity policies

Eveline (1994, 141) suggests that this "indirect approach to male privilege" is actually, at least in part, the result of a fear of retaliation for the "recalling" through redistributive equal opportunity policies, of the benefits and privileges of men. Further, Shanley (1991,

170) points out that radical critiques of theories of sexual equality dating from Mill's *The Subjection of Women* (1869), have emphasised not only men's reluctance to give up their position of material advantage, but also their "fear of living with an equal" in both domestic and civil life. Male resistance to female equality is a very real factor in women's continuing under-representation in public life (Cockburn, 1991) and their rights to participate as citizens as men's equals. It has its counterpart in education which is discussed below.

In summary, then, there are a number of inadequacies in *Whereas the People* as a program for curriculum change in citizenship education. First, it fails to address the nexus of schooling and the curriculum with the sexual division of labour and the work/care dialectic, and in so doing, perpetuates assumptions about what is appropriate work for men and women. Second, it endorses a paradigm which underwrites the citizen/learner as anglo-Australian male and marginalises difference as "other". Third, in endorsing that paradigm, there is no challenge to the present public/male foundations of the curriculum. Fourth, the add-on approach to the inclusion of private/female virtues reinforces the public-private dichotomy within the curriculum.

I have discussed above some of the compexities and nuances in men's and women's different relations with citizenship, and their implications for curriculum, which are obscured in *Whereas the People*. The final section of this article briefly discusses some contemporary manifestations of sexual inequality in schooling which bear directly on questions of women's relationship with citizenship.

Schooling and citizenship: the public-private dichotomy in education

1. The lived curriculum

That men's and women's lived experiences of citizenship are quite different has parallels in school life, and in the "lived curriculum" of schooling (Foster, 1994a). I have already referred to the ways in which the citizen-as-male is predicated on the valorisation of virtuous woman. Analogous to this, a work-care dichotomy is perpetuated by the formal curriculum framework of *Whereas the People*, with respect to its view of work-related competencies. However, just as important are the differences in the ways in which girls and boys experience and live the curriculum day-to-day. For instance, women's virtuous and caretaking functions have their counterpart in coeducational classroom life where girls are expected to be caretakers of the learning environment. For example, girls are routinely expected to moderate the behaviour of boys, soften the classroom atmosphere, be "good girls", and not to exhibit the kinds of undisciplined behaviours which are taken to be "natural" for boys and which often gain sympathetic attention for them. This expectation can be seen on one level to be a transfer of the practices of the private, domestic sphere into the public setting of the school's learning situation, the classroom. Specifically, "private" imperatives relating to women's perceived primary functions in the areas of sexuality, motherhood and caretaking are brought into the micro-public domain of the school. On another level, however, this expectation can also be seen to be a particular feature of educational settings.

At this second level, there is a profound sense in which despite the Australian policy discourse of educational equality, educational practices reflect an assumption that boys' interests and their learning are of prior importance to girls'. Australian research (Teese, Davies, Charlton and Polesel, 1995) shows that girls do not gain advantages over boys from equal or even superior scholastic performance. Far more important is girls' relationship with the curriculum hierarchy and girls from lower status backgrounds continue to be especially disadvantaged. Labour market and workplace training opportunities leave girls with fewer choices than boys and pressure them to make more intensive use of school. On the other hand, boys are able to make less use of school because they have available an organised alternative system of education which girls do not have: accredited vocational training in the workplace. As indicators of gender

relativities, formal curriculum location and performance, and post-school transition show that girls and boys experience schooling in quite different ways.

In addition, there are many examples of the greater importance placed on boys' learning and associated problems, such as the greater amount of teacher time devoted to boys, the attention given to boys' learning difficulties and discipline problems, the greater amount of physical space and school sporting facilities used by boys, and boys' domination of technical and computer equipment. In New South Wales, for instance, up to 90% of specialist education resources currently go to boys. These barriers to girls' equal status in education have been repeatedly documented in Australia since the 1975 Report, *Girls, School and Society.*

In effect, it seems that girls and boys are engaged in rather different projects at school; that they live ostensibly the same curriculum in somewhat differing ways. Many boys see school primarily as the avenue to paid work, whatever that may be. The present overwhelming instrumental emphasis on narrowly defined work-related competencies (where the nature of "work" is not interrogated) is not helping to broaden that view. Girls, on the other hand, see a range of present and future priorities. They seem to see participation in school life and its responsibilities, including learning, as more relevant and important than boys do. Boys, on the other hand it seems, want to distinguish their masculinity from girls' diligence, to dissociate themselves from the "good girls". On this point, the NSW Evaluation (1994, 61) observes that in some schools "there is a pervading culture of anti-intellectualism fuelled by significant numbers of boys, resulting in severe disruption of learning and denigration of the academic achievements of both boys and girls". Further, girls said they would not answer questions in class, or appear to try to succeed, as they were inhibited by the likely reaction of boys.

2. Desire and threat in girls' schooling

Since 1993, Australian equal education policies and programs have increasingly been contested as girls began to be be erroneously constructed in the popular press as beating boys in the prestigious male-dominated curriculum terrain of mathematics, science and technology. The hostility on the part of some to equality in schooling for girls has taken the form of a refrain around *What about the boys!* in an attempt to reassert male educational interests as prior (Foster, 1994b; 1995). This refrain is echoing internationally. For example, Elgqvist-Saltzman (1995, 1) reports that an international conference on gender and education held in June, 1995 at the University of Umea, Sweden

> resulted in a strong feeling of unease around the topic. Why did we feel that gains made were insufficient, were painfully slow, and furthermore were vigorously contested? Common themes emerged which highlighted continuing tensions between girls and boys, men and women, in a range of educational settings. When females approach male performance levels and access, a discourse of male disadvantage reverberates through the research literature and the popular press. "What shall we do about the boys?" trumpet the headlines in Australia, Great Britain, Canada and Scandinavia.

The largely unexpressed subtext of this refrain is that notions of educational equality for girls entail taking something very crucial away from boys, their supremacy as learners, as well as the caretaking resources of women and girls, to which boys are assumed to be entitled. In Australia, the response has been the setting up of Parliamentary enquiries and special government research groups to investigate boys' "disadvantage" in the face of girls' improved educational performance relative to boys at the end of schooling, although the evidence is clear that this is not translating into better post-school quality of life for women (Teese, et. al. 1995). An unspoken question in the rush to shore up boys' supremacy in schooling is, what would happen to them if girls were to become their equals in schooling and its outcomes, and stop being their caretakers?

At the same time that priority is given to boys' learning problems, there has been a failure to date to address comprehensively within the curriculum, the problem of sexual harassment of girls as an endemic feature of schools, and its effects on girls' learning (Australian Education Council, 1992; NSW Department of School Education, 1994). This is an issue which has been strenuously avoided in recent discussions of boys and their education.

Philosophical interpretations of desire

Addressing issues of equality in education from the perspectives of girls themselves raises a crucial question: *what desire(s) do girls actually experience in and of schooling*? There are very good reasons to believe that girls desire to learn, that they value their schooling and the learning environment. During the past decade in Australia, there is no doubt that this desire has been encouraged and nurtured by girls' education policies which have stressed the need for girls' greater achievement in male-dominated subjects, and girls have been happy to oblige. The latter comment is not made light-heartedly, nor is it meant to imply any criticism of girls. Rather, my view is that girls are caught up in conflicting educational discourses relating to desire, and that girls' own experiential relationship with desire cannot be understood without the accompanying notion of threat. For this reason, it is far less clear *what* girls really desire from schools, and what a curriculum originating in girls' active subjectivity would look like.

Girls' relationship with the curriculum is one characterised by both desire and threat. Grosz (1989:xv), describes desire as a pivotal concept, distinguishing two quite different intellectual traditions. The first tradition, which encompasses Plato, Hegel and Lacan, conceives of desire as a "fundamental lack in being, an incompletion or absence within the subject which the subject experiences as a disquieting loss, and which prompts it into the activity of seeking an appropriate object to fill the lack". Grosz notes that for Lacan, "desire is an ontological lack which ensures the separation of the subject from the immediacy of its natural and social environment, and the impulse of that subject to fill in this space through, in the first instance, the desire of the (m)other; and in the second, through its access to language and systems of meaning".

In the second tradition which Grosz (1989:xvi), sees as encompassing Spinoza, Nietzsche, Foucault and Deleuze, desire is conceived not as a lack but as a positive force of production and self-actualisation. In this second sense, at the level of the subject, desire functions insofar as the subject "desires the expansion or maximisation of its power... it is not an unactualised or latent potential; it is always active and real". Grosz notes that feminists have usually used the first notion of desire to explain women's position within patriarchy as the objects of men's desire; however, more recently she suggests, "a number have turned to the Nietzchean notion, which links desire directly and without mediation to power and resistance".

Policy discourse concerning the desirable educational achievements of girls has at different times philosophically encompassed both the senses of desire which Grosz has delineated. Earlier, girls were constructed as lacking the necessary masculine learner subjectivity as well as the necessary male-defined knowledge. The very meaning of "girl" included a negativity or lack (Jones, 1993:12). In this construction, the lack was to be removed by increasing girls' access to masculine knowledge areas, but not it transpired, their achievement relative to boys in those areas. This first platonic sense of desire as lack resonates with the philosophical and social construction of femininity as "other" to the masculine. This sense is reflected also in the philosophical notion of the simulacrum, whereby women can be mere copies of men (Olkowski, 1993; Vasseleu, 1993), or mirrors reflecting men's subjectivity back to them (Irigaray, 1985). Thus, it could be argued that for girls, the philosophical construction of desire in this first sense would have a logical consistency to which they could relate, given the normative climate of the school in relation to its curriculum, and its material-ideological practices. This was a very comfortable, non-threatening construction of girls' relationship with the curriculum.

The second sense of desire referred to by Grosz is, however, much more problematic for girls, because it invokes a more inherently masculine orientation to desire, that of actively seeking and pursuing achievement, and to an extent, power. To date, even more problematically for girls, that achievement has centered specifically on masculine curriculum areas and subject domains. Although the discourse of reform is couched

philosophically in Grosz's first platonic sense, the implications for girls of following that discourse, as well as the outcomes, relate directly to Grosz's second sense of self-actualisation. In concrete terms, this has resulted in the perception that girls are interlopers and "space invaders" in male educational terrain, depriving boys of their rights (Foster, 1996). The crucial point here then is that for girls to desire in this second sense places them not only in a contradictory position as "educated women" (Martin,1991), but also in a position of threat, which is both actual in school, and potential in relation to post-school life. It is significant that the *What about the boys!* movement emerged at the precise moment (and not a moment earlier) that girls were perceived to be outstripping boys in the the areas of male power and privilege in schooling. Prior to that, boys' education was only an issue for feminists and educationists concerned with improving gender relations. This point is obvious if one asks whether there would have been such concern about boys and their schooling if the contested areas had been different. What if the newspapers had reported, "girls beating boys at childcare and home management!"? No problem, I would suggest.

The nature of threat: its relationship with desire

The first construction of desire as lack, and girls as lacking masculine learner subjectivity, can be seen to pose no particular threat to hegemonic masculinity. In fact, it could be argued that the construction of girls as lacking in relation to hegemonic masculinity might have the effect of reinforcing that hegemony. It might further be argued that the earlier construction of girls as lacking essential knowledge in a paradigmatically masculine curriculum would have the effect of reinforcing that paradigm in the curriculum. Until mid-1993 in Australia, that was the case.

It is the second self-actualising sense of desire in the educational setting which, by challenging male privilege, becomes threatening for girls and women. This is the sense which comes into play when women refuse to be constructed as lacking as in the first sense of desire and actively pursue their educational and occupational goals.

Media depictions of girls as outperforming boys in male-dominated subjects have elicited some strong reactions. The statement, "Girls to the fore in HSC maths" (*Sydney Morning Herald,* 20/7/1993) carries a very different message from the messages of the past decade that girls were "underachieving" in maths. In terms of TMS, theoretically it would follow that for girls to outperform boys may prove to be very threatening for girls. Indeed, the article cited above prompted a Letter to the Editor (S.Dando, 20 July, 1993) entitled, "How about the boys?", in which the writer comments, "Feminine superiority, not equality, in all subjects seems to be important in the 1990s", and asks, "What is the minister's and the board's agenda for boys?"

A number of questions are raised by the foregoing discussion of desire and threat in girls' schooling. For instance, what might happen if girls move outside the frame of their construction as lacking in relation to boys? How could girls be the caretakers of boys if they are equal (or better?) achievers? Such a prospect could be very threatening for girls and their education. For example, the current reaction to girls' perceived advances in maths and science may well make it very difficult for girls to pursue excellence in those subjects, if they are seen as depriving boys of their rights as the high achievers in those areas. In fact, girls' performance in those subjects actually declined from 1993 to 1994 (Board of Studies, 1995), when the backlash period was beginning to gain momentum.

The interesting question is also raised of whether, and to what extent, girls and women use caretaking and other strategies such as negotiation and accommodation as a means of controlling the threat against them which is posed by greater equality? For as Naffine (1995,36) observes, there is a strong injunction on women to continue to support public and private man's existence. His subjectivity depends on her lack of it (Irigaray, 1985). "He needs to keep her quiet" (Naffine, 1995, 36), a pale reflection, a mere simulacrum, and a bad copy at that! The experiences of women who have achieved high government

office in Australia are cases in point. Schooling, a microcosm encompassing aspects of both public and private life, continues to endorse this injunction on female students and women teachers. Finally, given that the value-added dimensions (to use an economic rationalist concept) of care and caretaking are vastly different according to whether they are done by men or women, where does this leave care as a curriculum issue? This question is very pertinent in Australia where care-related matters have been relegated to the bottom of the curriculum hierarchy.

Certainly when women actively seek and occupy places on what is seen as male terrain, this can become life-threatening to them, as the mass murder in 1989 of fourteen female Engineering students at the University of Montreal demonstrates (Lewis, 1990). The mere existence of policies on girls' education has begun to provoke indignation about the harm they may do to boys' interests. These policies together with their success in terms of girls' improved participation and performance in specifically male-defined areas, have produced a subtle shift from the perspective of girls as lacking, into Grosz's second sense of desire, in which girls can be seen to be actively seeking educational success. It might be predicted, then, that this shift could prove in the near future to be a threatening one for girls. The rush to develop compensatory programs for boys is, I believe, the beginning of a threatening response to girls and to policies concerning their education.

Desire and threat as dialectical experiences in girls' schooling

Studies such as those of Samuel (1983), Lees (1993), and Roman (1993) have provided insights into aspects of girls' relationships with school cultures. As yet, however, there exists no comprehensive account of how girls engage and receive the curriculum and schooling generally.

At various points in this paper, I have reiterated that education for women is both contradictory (Martin, 1991) and inasmuch as it entails movement into male terrain, potentially threatening and dangerous. Noting that it is not uncommon for women to experience male violence in connection with educational participation, Rockhill (1987:316) observes that "we know little about how it is lived in women's lives". Specifically discussing literacy, Rockhill (1987:315) notes that for many women, education is a means of becoming "somebody", and that it has functioned as a primary site of both "regulation and of rebellion".

I agree with Rockhill's observations of the inherent threat which is posed when women pursue an education; my specific interest is in the ways in which girls may experience and resolve for themselves the simultaneous desire to be "somebody" which education offers, and the potential threat to them from those who in turn feel threatened by girls' living out of this desire. There is an important point here: that there is a mutuality of threat and desire in girls' schooling which is itself partly the product of girls' desire for learning. This is not at all to suggest that girls themselves cause this threat or bring it upon themselves. My argument here is that both desire and threat are in turn produced by the neo-liberal equality framework, and that they form a dialectical relationship, in that framework. I am describing that relationship as dialectical because of the apparent opposing connotations of the notions of desire and threat, and because of the dynamic interplay of them in girls' schooling lives. I would wish to maintain that far from being unaware of the conflicting nature of these forces, girls are keenly aware of both, and of their dialectical influence on their schooling and its outcomes. It is this awareness that leads to girls' self-regulatory behaviour, for example, when speaking of male-dominated occupations, saying, "I agree with all of that, but I wouldn't want to do it myself" (Foster,1984:22), and more recently, removing the focus from themselves by asking, "what should we be doing to help boys to change?"

The space between private and public spheres in the curriculum

For women and girls to pursue equality as citizens and as learners necessitates their traversing an experiential space between the private and public domains of contemporary social life, including schooling. This is a space of concrete and psychic experience, created when women attempt to live the discourse of neo-liberal equality. It is a space which mediates between private and public spheres, and is contiguous with them. It can also be seen as a hidden, obscured and invisible area behind the discourse of equality, often surrounded by silence and censorship. This latter phenomenon is illustrated in education, for example, by the tendency to underplay the effects on girls' learning of hostile learning environments.

Women and girls are reminded, often harshly, that they are flouting the norms of the sexual contract (Pateman, 1988) when they enter this space. In relation to education, it has been argued that within neo-liberalism, these norms are contravened when girls and women express their desire to pursue equality with men in fuller senses, beyond the limited scope of their being the virtuous upholders of "patriarchal sex-right" (Pateman, 1988:1) or domination and the caretakers of male subjectivity. This notion is consistent with the merging that has occurred between the private and public spheres of social life, occasioned by women's movement into public life. However, it is in this mediating space of women's attempts to traverse the boundaries from private to public involvement, that women are reminded physically, bodily, sexually that they are women, that is, not-men.

These reminders of difference are embedded in the taken-for-granted practices of schooling, such as the injunction to be caretakers of the classroom learning environment, being treated as having secondary status as learners, and experiencing the most highly valued curriculum areas as not connecting with their experience, and as the rightful property of males. Thus, this space is not merely a metaphor, but the place where girls' schooling experiences occur. It is not just characterised by contradictions and double binds. It is more profoundly the place where the asymmetry of gender is experienced by girls in schooling, as lived curriculum.

In the discussion above, I have highlighted some of the real issues of continuing sexual difference and inequality in curriculum participation and its outcomes, which bear directly on men's and women's participation as citizens. I have argued, as Leech (1994, 87) does, that "in order for citizenship to assume its full meaning for women, theory development is needed at such a deep and fundamental level, that an 'add women and stir' response would be of no value". In terms of citizenship education, for real progress to be made in women's assuming full citizenship, both educational philosophy and curriculum theory and practice need to be radically reinvestigated.

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